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MONDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1928

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# The Classical Weekly

VOLUME XXII, No. 2

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## LINGUISTIC SCIENCE AND CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY

### The Linguistic Institute, Session of 1928

When the editor of THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY invited us to prepare a statement of the distinction and the relationship between the science of language and that of philology—especially classical philology—, we felt compelled to undertake the task. For we believe that a large proportion of the students of philology are without a just conception of the nature and the purposes of linguistic science, and that their efficiency as scholars is continually hampered thereby. The blame is not all on one side; much of the teaching and writing on linguistic science, as on other sciences, is in a form that is bound to repel any person with sensitive nerves. Great scientific gifts are frequently combined with an almost total lack of the artistic sense; human nature comes that way, and it is idle to complain about the fact.

A clear-cut distinction between linguistics and philology is scarcely possible, since they are parts of a single whole, and each inevitably encroaches upon the other's territory. Both are concerned with speech, and, in large part, with the same documents. To say that linguistics lays emphasis on spoken language, and philology on written language will not carry us far; the languages known only from written records have contributed the larger part of the sure results of linguistic science, and philological study of a poem or of an oration must take account of the living voice behind the writing. In fact, the only justification for a separation between linguistics and philology is the necessity for a division of labor—*non omnia possumus omnes*.

In general, linguistics deals with language as such, while philology<sup>1</sup> is primarily concerned with the form and particularly with the content of specific documents. While linguists fix their attention upon the complicated system of abstractions which we call a language, philologists deal chiefly with definite texts. One must add that these abstractions, like all general statements, must be based upon details, and that the linguist must spend much of his time establishing grammatical facts. Conversely the philologist does not stop with

<sup>1</sup>Friedrich August Wolf's conception of philology as the biography of a nation (given in his *Darstellung der Altertumswissenschaft*) does not fit the facts; no one scholar can cover so large a field, and, if he did, we should call the result history. For a sketch of the history of the term philology see Hanna Oertel, *Lectures on the Study of Language*, 1-86 (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902).

Professor George M. Boiling suggests by letter that, while linguistics is the study of man's speech-habits, philology is the study of what those habits have enabled man to accomplish. This statement puts philology on its proper linguistic foundation, but is open to the objection just urged against Wolf's view, since practically all civilization is the result of language.

Probably philologists will not be satisfied with our description of their subject. Neither are we; we hope to see a better description from the pen of a philologist.

interpreting specific texts; he constructs generalizations of his own, but his generalizations, instead of being confined to one sphere and forming a system, like those of the linguist, are as multifarious as life itself.

Linguists study language for itself, while philologists regard language as a means to an end; linguistics is a pure science, while philology is the corresponding applied science. But the parallel is not perfect, for the linguistic point of view may be of immediate utility, and much of the best philological work has been done without a thought beyond the establishment of a correct text or a correct interpretation.

Possibly there is a better way of stating the difference between the linguistic and the philological point of view. But no really satisfactory statement can be framed, because there is no logical division between them; each is so necessary a complement of the other that all linguists must be philologists and all philologists linguists—as far as human limitations permit. Since, then, the distinction between linguistics and philology is chiefly one of practical convenience, the only way to delimit them is to give an account of both. That, however, is too large a task for a magazine article, and, besides, we do not presume to undertake an account of philology. Fortunately, philology is the science that is most familiar to the readers of THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY.

Linguistic science falls into four main divisions: general linguistics, comparative grammar (often called comparative philology), historical grammar, and descriptive grammar. Our School Grammars are devoted to descriptive grammar, with a slight admixture of historical grammar. Comparative grammar traces the connections among related languages, while general linguistics treats of the phenomena that are found to prevail in all speech, or in a number of languages.

General linguistics has inevitably been of later growth than the other three divisions of the science, and it is still far from its maturity. Nevertheless there are certain principles of fundamental importance to philologists as well as to linguists that have been fully established.

Most important of all is the principle of the regularity of the phonetic laws<sup>2</sup>. When prehistoric Latin final -ōs, except after u or v, became -us, the change occurred in every word where the required conditions existed; and, later on, when -nos and -ros became -nus and -rus, this change too was regular. Similarly, ai in initial syllables became ae, not in one word or in a few words, but in all, except those in which i was double, as aio (pronounced ai-i-o). The importance of this principle lies in the fact that it makes possible a

<sup>2</sup>For a popular account of this principle and of its limitations see E. H. Sturtevant, *Phonetic Laws*, The Classical Journal 23, 258-265.

scientific treatment of etymology; instead of connecting two words on the basis of superficial resemblance, we know precisely what likenesses and what differences to look for. Latin *deus* was once supposed to be identical with Greek θεός; but we now know that initial *d* in Latin must be represented in Greek by θ, while Greek θεός (which is shown by θεόφατος, 'god-spoken', to have lost an intervocalic *o*) would necessarily appear in Latin as \**ferus*<sup>2</sup>. Instead, Latin *deus* is historically the same word as the nearly equivalent *divus*, both being identical with Sanskrit *devas*, 'god', from original \**deivos*. The formal difference between *deus* and *divus* arose from the regular loss of *v* before short *o* in the prehistoric Latin nominative \**deivos* and accusative \**deivom*. The resulting \**deios* and \**deiom* became, by the operation of certain phonetic laws, *deus* and *deum*. Before *i*, *v* was not lost, and so the genitive regularly became *divi*. Then each of the two declensions was filled out, so that one might say *deus* or *divus* and *divi* or *dei*. There arose in time some tendency to differentiate the two forms in use, so that *deus* was usually a substantive and *divus* usually an adjective; but there are numerous evidences, particularly in early Latin, of their original equivalence.

The process which gave *deus* a new genitive *dei* and *divi* a new nominative *divus* is known as analogy<sup>3</sup>. It consists in assimilating one part of our speech to another. In this case the numerous pairs of nominative and genitive, such as *erus* : *eri*, *hortus* : *horti*, *bonus* : *boni*, induced a form *dei* to correspond to *deus* and *divus* to correspond to *divi*.

Analogy tends constantly to remove irregularities in declension and conjugation. Thus early Latin *arbos*: *arboris* became *arbor* : *arboris* on the model of *consul* : *consulis*, *victor* : *victoris*, etc. The irregular subjunctive *edim* (an old inherited form), from *edo*, gave way to the regular *edam*. In popular Latin of all periods there was a tendency to make new nominatives in -*is*, -*es*, or -*e* (neuter) for nouns which increase in the genitive; so *stirpis* for *stirps*, *lacte* for *lac*. Similarly, the irregular infinitives *esse*, *posse*, and *nelle* have given way to Italian *essere*, *potere*, and *volere*.

These two principles, regular phonetic change and analogy, are constantly at work in every living language. Phonetic change tends to produce irregularity and analogy seeks to restore the lost regularity. Whenever these principles cease to operate, a language may be said to be dead, but it is safe to say that they never stop as long as a language continues to be learned by anyone as his first language—as long as it is anybody's mother tongue. Evidently Modern Greek and the Romance Languages are still alive, but in this sense 'life' cannot be claimed for classical Greek and classical Latin, or for any other language of the past.

It was the recognition of the regularity of the phonetic laws and of the vital importance of analogy that

made possible a scientific treatment of the formal side of language. It is the lack of such guiding principles as these that has prevented a like development of syntax and of semantics (that is, of the science of meaning). There are indications that something may be done for these two subjects by applying rigorously a principle whose soundness has long been recognized in a perfunctory way. No distinction is important in a given language unless it is normally expressed by a form in that language. Therefore we should base our syntactic classes upon form rather than upon logic. It is no doubt a subtle exercise in reasoning to distinguish sharply the ablative of manner, of time, of accompaniment, of means, etc., but it is an exercise that has little bearing upon the history or the interpretation of the Latin language. It would be simpler as well as more scientific if we should treat separately the ablative without a modifier, the ablative with a modifying adjective, the ablative with *cum*, etc., illustrating each class by typical sentences. These categories would have had some meaning for Cicero; but he would have been as puzzled as any School boy of to-day by some of the ablative constructions listed in our Latin Grammars.

The terms *nominative* and *accusative* formerly applied to English almost as well as to Latin; and they are still useful in treating the history of the English language. Modern English, however, has lost all case-forms except the possessive case and six pronominal forms that formerly distinguished the nominative from the dative-accusative. That even these six forms no longer function in the same way as the corresponding Latin forms is shown by two remarkable groups of facts. (1) Nearly all native speakers occasionally fall into lapses such as 'There is nobody else here but me', 'The man whom I said hit me', 'He is the man who several days ago I asked to come'. (2) We all disregard the syntactic values of the so-called case-forms in interpreting such sentences as the above, and also in the following, which we might not ourselves use: 'Him and me hit the man', 'The man hit you and I'. Furthermore, the sentence 'He likes her better than me', is felt to be ambiguous, and is therefore expanded into 'He likes her better than he does me'.

The traditional terminology can scarcely describe these familiar bits of present-day English. Possibly a consistent application of our principle that syntactic categories should be based upon form would reveal some important facts and tendencies in the use of English nouns and pronouns.

An important section of general linguistics is the science of phonetics. It is so large and laborious a subject that its devotees must give it nearly all their time in order to accomplish anything worth while. For practical purposes, therefore, it must be considered an independent discipline. Nevertheless, its results are indispensable for linguistic science and also for philology; not all linguists and philologists can be phoneticians, but they all need some training in phonetics if they are to avoid serious errors in their own fields.

For example, Greek and Latin metrics has received elaborate and accurate treatment both in ancient and in

<sup>2</sup>This is not the actual Latin word *ferus*, 'wild', which is connected with Greek θηρίον, 'beast'. When two words of different meaning become identical by phonetic development, one of the two frequently disappears, as in this instance, and its meaning is assumed by some other word. In this way ambiguities are avoided.

<sup>3</sup>For a popular account of this principle see E. H. Sturtevant, *Analogy, The Vital Principle of Language*, THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 20, 93-97.

modern times; but, instead of being an exact science, metrics is a subject about which scarcely two men agree, except that the student often agrees with the teacher until he begins independent study. The chief reason is ignorance of phonetics. Here are a few of the resultant blunders.

(1) Since no division between words is audible except where the word-end is also the end of the phrase, all theories of caesura which operate with word-ends as such are absurd. The facts upon which such theories are based are real enough, but practically all of the theorizing is certainly false.

(2) Since rhythm consists of a series of events arranged more or less regularly in time, all rhythm must be quantitative. Therefore the familiar contrast between quantitative and accentual rhythm, as ordinarily stated, is absurd.

(3) Rhythm as rapid as verse is inevitably organized into two or more grades: a primary rhythm, a secondary, and often a tertiary. The clock does not seem to say 'tick tick tick tick', but 't'ck tick tick tick', or, rather, 't'ck tick tick tick t'ck tick tick tick'. The traditional system of syllables, feet, and metra fits perfectly into such a scheme, but the books on classical metrics do not even get the problem stated.

One must admit that phonetic science is yet in its beginnings, and that it has still to settle several questions of fundamental importance for metrics. Probably an adequate treatment of metrics is for that reason impossible at present. But it is foolish for philologists to go on writing about metrics in ignorance of phonetics. They ought rather to join in the demand for phonetic laboratories, and in the meantime to apply a reasonable scepticism to the metrical theories of Hephaestion.

Comparative grammar consists in tracing words, forms, or constructions in two or more related languages to their common source in a parent language. Greek *δέκα* and Latin *decem* both grew out of primitive Indo-European \**dék m̥* (*k* was like English *k* in *king*; *m* was like English *om* in *bosom*). This identification is based upon two phonetic laws, both of which are established by sure etymologies and supported by parallel phonetic laws: (1) I.-E. *m* became Greek *α*; (2) I.-E. *m* became Latin *em*. Sanskrit *pitári* (locative), Greek *πατρί* (dative), and Latin *patre* (ablative) presuppose I.-E. \**putéri* (*v* may have been like the first and last vowels of English *banana*). Greek and Latin both lost the penultimate vowel by analogy with other cases; the other changes of sound follow the phonetic laws. Although the case-labels of our word in these three historical languages are all different, it is noteworthy that the Greek dative and the Latin ablative are both used to denote 'the place where'; there is no doubt that I.-E. \**potéri* was a locative.

This sort of study enables us to penetrate far into the prehistoric period, and to make a surprising number of statements about the Indo-European community, which probably came to an end at least as early as 3000 B. C. It is chiefly important to classical philol-

ogists because it provides an important part of the background against which classical civilization must be viewed, and because it frequently enables us to distinguish the Indo-European and the borrowed elements of the Greek and the Latin languages, and, inferentially, of the Greek and the Roman religion, mythology, constitution, etc.

The historical grammar of a particular language traces the development of that language either from a parent speech or from some later period. Descriptive grammar, on the other hand, treats of a language as it exists at some particular time. For many languages, of which no written records exist, only a descriptive grammar of the present-day speech can be written, unless the grammar of related languages or the facts of the language itself make it possible to infer an earlier stage. Our School Grammars of Greek and Latin arbitrarily choose the language of a particular period for full treatment, and append brief statements of the divergent usage of other periods. This creates the impression that the chosen period represents a linguistic norm, and that differences from it—even earlier differences—are due to some sort of corruption. Thus the conception of language as a steadily developing and generally improving system is largely obscured. Some one phase of the language must, of course, be fully described, and there is practical justification for the choice usually made in connection with both the classical languages. But, whenever forms and constructions of other periods are mentioned, they should be put into historical perspective.

It will surprise some to hear descriptive grammar called a part of linguistic science, for the descriptive grammar of the classical languages is usually taught by people who have had no training in linguistics. The subject is ordinarily treated as a part of philology—as indeed it is, since it enables one to interpret the texts. Nevertheless it is equally evident that descriptive grammar forms the basis of historical and comparative grammar and of general linguistics, while the latter disciplines have contributed much and can contribute a great deal more to the effective teaching of descriptive grammar.

Intelligent beginners always ask the teacher many embarrassing questions: 'What's the use of declension and conjugations?', 'Why not decline pronouns the same way as nouns?', 'Why is a negative command not expressed by the imperative?', 'Is the imperfect subjunctive just the present infinitive with personal endings?', 'Why does the future active participle have the same stem as the perfect passive participle?' Neither linguistic science nor anything else can answer all such questions; but it is simply fatal for a teacher to discourage intellectual curiosity, even in its crudest forms. From one who knows something about linguistic science almost any sincere question may call forth effective teaching. No one knows why adjectives agree with their nouns in Latin; but, when a pupil asks why they so agree, it is worth while to tell him that such agreement is found in all the older Indo-European languages, but that it is a disease from which English has fortunately recovered. Then you can go on to

<<sup>2</sup>In this paragraph *m*, is used, perforce, for *m* with a circle under it, the form employed by linguists. C. K. >

show some of the incidental advantages which the system of concord possesses, even though it is for the most part a mere nuisance. Some may care to add that most nuisances have some good points.

We have presented a few typical examples of the help that linguistic science can give philology and of the errors philology makes when she neglects the sister science. It would be easy to point out equally serious errors on the part of linguists who have neglected sound philological method, but that list should be published in some periodical whose readers are chiefly linguists.

We admit also that the results of classical philology are easily available in excellent handbooks, whereas good handbooks on Greek and Latin grammar and etymology are few in any language and particularly few in English. For example, the existing etymological dictionaries are practically useless for philologists without some technical training in linguistics. We need etymological dictionaries written in a clear and reasonably fluent style, and indicating what is relatively certain and what is mere conjecture. Such a book might well omit much of the material carried in our present etymological dictionaries, and it should include some treatment of the less obvious derivatives.

This and other gaps in our apparatus ought to have been filled long ago; but the half dozen American scholars working in the field of the scientific grammar of Greek and Latin are not to blame. Although most of us, in order to make a living, have had to devote the major portion of our time to philological rather than to linguistic work, no impartial observer will accuse us of sloth in prosecuting our chosen task. If there is a lack of English handbooks on linguistic science, that is because British and American Universities give our subject little support. If ever professorships of linguistic science are established in adequate number, there will be no lack of linguists or of linguistic publications. No other subject is more certain to develop productive scholarship in its followers.

In the meantime American linguists have undertaken to help themselves. In 1924 The Linguistic Society of America was organized. It holds annual meetings for the reading and the discussion of papers, and publishes a quarterly called *Language*, as well as a series of linguistic monographs and a series of linguistic dissertations.

At the annual meeting in December, 1927, The Linguistic Society of America voted to hold a Linguistic Institute in the summer of 1928, for the purpose of more extended conferences. It was decided to offer at the same time a wide range of linguistic courses. The session was arranged for the six weeks from July 9 to August 17, under the direction of a committee consisting of the writers of this article and Professor R. E. Saleski, of Bethany College. The place selected was New Haven, and Yale University placed its facilities at the service of the Institute. The Carnegie Corporation of New York supplied very important financial support.

The courses offered were as follows (the six marked with an asterisk were not actually given):

Introduction to Linguistic Science, Professor Edward Prokosch, New York University; Philological Pho-

netics, Professor G. Oscar Russell, Ohio State University; Experimental Phonetics, Professor Russell; Some Recent Theories of Linguistic Science, Dr. Karl Reuning, University of Breslau, Germany; Methods of Studying Unrecorded Languages, Dr. J. Alden Mason, University of Pennsylvania Museum; Sanskrit, Professor Franklin Edgerton, Yale University; \*Pali, Professor Edgerton; Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin, Professor Edgar H. Sturtevant, Yale University; Greek Dialects, Professor George M. Bolling, Ohio State University; The Language of the Homeric Poems, Professor Bolling; Oscar and Umbrian, Professor Roland G. Kent, University of Pennsylvania; Early Latin and its Development into Classical Latin, Professor Kent; Latin Syntax, Professor Emeritus Herbert C. Elmer, Cornell University; Vulgar Latin and Introduction to Romance Philology, Professor Raymond T. Hill, Yale University; Old French Phonology and Morphology, Professor Otto Müller, Gettysburg College; Historical Syntax of the French Language, Professor Müller; Old Provengal, Professor Hill; History of the Italian Language, Professor Angelo Lipari, Yale University; Old Spanish, Professor Frank O. Reed, University of Arizona; \*Old Portuguese, Professor Reed; Early Irish, Professor Joseph Dunn, Catholic University of America; Early Welsh, Professor Dunn; Gothic and Comparative Germanic Philology, Professor Emeritus Hermann Collitz, The Johns Hopkins University; Old Norse, Professor George T. Flom, University of Illinois; \*Old High German, Professor Daniel B. Shumway, University of Pennsylvania; History of the German Language, Professor Shumway; \*An Introduction to the History of the Dutch Language, Professor Willem L. Graff, McGill University; Old English, Professor Kemp Malone, The Johns Hopkins University; History of the English Language, Professor Malone; American English, Professor Louise Pound, University of Nebraska; Lithuanian and Church Slavonic, Professor Prokosch; \*Hittite, Professor Sturtevant; Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages, Professor Frank R. Blake, The Johns Hopkins University; Hebrew, Professor Blake; Assyrian, Professor Raymond P. Dougherty, Yale University; Arabic, Professor Dougherty; Turkish, Professor Reuning.

There was also a series of public lectures on Tuesday and Friday evenings, as follows:

The Conquests of the Latin Language, Professor Kent; The Fallacy of the Vowel Triangle, Professor Russell; The Problem of Standard Speech, Professor Malone; The Origin and Trend of Vowel Mutation in Germanic, Professor Prokosch; The History of Ideas and Changes in Vocabulary, Professor Carl D. Buck, University of Chicago; Syntactical Influences upon the Present Inflection in Middle English, Dr. Reuning; Chinese for Grammarians, Professor Saleski; The Languages of India, Professor Edgerton; Some Fundamental Notions in Linguistics, Professor Collitz; Some Aspects of the Homeric Question, Professor Bolling.

These more formal activities of the Institute did not obscure its primary purpose of furnishing opportunity for conference between scholars. Several of the smaller courses were really conferences between two or more scholars, where all were learners. Each public lecture was followed by active discussion; several of them led to further debates between two or more persons, which will have considerable effect upon certain forthcoming publications. These and other conversations will no doubt be fruitful for years to come. Since the contacts thus established were not otherwise likely to occur, we see in them one of the chief benefits of the Institute.

The total membership of the Institute was sixty-five, of whom thirty-three were doctors of philosophy and nineteen others masters of arts. Thirty-five were professors and seven were instructors in Colleges or Universities. One was a curator and one a research associate in a museum, and one was an author. Eleven were teachers in Secondary Schools, and nine were graduate students. Forty-three persons took courses.

The members of the Institute voted to recommend the holding of another session at New Haven in the summer of 1929, and the Executive Committee of The Linguistic Society of America has authorized the Administrative Committee to proceed with the arrangements.

YALE UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

EDGAR H. STURTEVANT  
ROLAND G. KENT

### REVIEWS

*The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire.* By M. Rostovtzeff. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, and Oxford University Press, American Branch (New York, 1926). Pp. xxv + 695. 60 plates. \$15.00.

It is a little startling to realize how present-day historians have almost reached the point of regarding the literary sources concerning ancient history as supplementary, rather than basic, to the understanding of ancient life. Though there are still followers of Benjamin Jowett who look upon archaeology and its related pursuits as mere pebble-collecting<sup>1</sup>, and although it is true that to students of ancient literature the latest discoveries are of secondary importance, nevertheless it cannot be denied that our whole conception, in general and in detail, of the *history* of the ancient world has been revolutionized during the past three-quarters of a century. The volume under review is a monument to the indefatigable zeal and the patient skill of generations of diggers and sorters. Only after one realizes what an overwhelming amount of research has been devoted to all phases of classical antiquity<sup>2</sup> can one appreciate the synthesis which Professor Rostovtzeff has attempted in this unusual volume. His notes (pages 489–631) give some clue to the technical equipment necessary to-day for the writer of an authoritative history of the ancient world. But even these notes are not the complete index to the information at the command of this modern Chalcenterus.

The title of the book is not well chosen. It is not a Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire, but an exhaustive study preliminary to an investigation of the problem of the 'fall of Rome', a question in

<sup>1</sup>On May 18, 1928, the members of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States heard, at Princeton University, a brilliant lecturer, Professor Paul Elmer More, take this position. His plea for philosophy as the guide to the problems of modern civilization and his conception of archaeology as an unworthy, even pernicious, waste of time will not readily be forgotten. The fields of history and of philosophy have become so divorced that not only may the historian lose sight of the general setting of his elusive fact, but the philosopher as well, zealous to synthesize all human activities, may, like Professor More, lose sight of the joy of the historical specialist merely in knowing 'wie es eigentlich geschehen ist'.

<sup>2</sup>See now the exhaustive list of J. Marouzeau, *Dix Années de Bibliographie Classique: Bibliographie Critique et Analytique de l'Antiquité Gréco-Latine pour la Période 1914–1924, 2 Volumes* (Paris, Société d'Édition 'Les Belles Lettres', 1927–1928).

which the author has a particular interest<sup>3</sup>. The chief part of the volume is the survey (Chapters 6–11:180–448) of conditions in the second and third centuries. The earlier portion of the book, that dealing with the Republic and the early Empire, is handled less fully, and the subsequent part, the "military monarchy", is, as the author states, merely a sketch<sup>4</sup>. The book, then, might more accurately be called 'The Social and Economic Decline of Ancient Civilization in the Second and Third Centuries of the Roman Empire'. It is devoted to the presentation of a single thesis. Far from being a mere impersonal sketch of historical sequence, it embodies the personal convictions of the author, convictions which are in large part based upon current political and economic conditions<sup>5</sup>. Readers will find Professor Rostovtzeff's thesis, whether they agree with it or not, stimulating and suggestive, and I have thought it best to give a rather detailed outline of the argument.

In the author's conception, the Romans were in turn subjected to three types of government: aristocracy, middle class rule, and the rule of the masses. Each of these periods presented definite changes in the social and economic order. These developments are somewhat as follows:

#### A. Aristocracy (to c. 107 B.C.) *Social*

Senate-knight alliance (landowners and business men). Power derived from wealth, and wealth in turn derived from exploitation of the resources of the State.

#### *Economic*

End of feudal capitalism of Republic which had been a handicap to economic development.

<sup>3</sup>He has already published, in Russian, a treatment of 'The Decline of Ancient Civilization' (see page 631, note 18, of the present volume), and has discussed the problem in detail in his *History of the Ancient World*, 2, 351–366. The topic, always a fascinating one, has been the object of much attention during the past few years. The book of Martin P. Nilsson, *Imperial Rome* (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company [no date]), is reviewed in this issue of THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY. Mr. Edward Lucas White's book, *Why Rome Fell* (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1927), will be reviewed presently in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY. See also Thomas Lloyd, *An Inquiry into the Causes of the Growth and Decay of Civilization* (London, The Statist, 1926). The spectacular work of Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West* (1918; English translation published by Allen and Unwin, London, and Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1926), is more discussed than read. A remarkable review of this work appeared in *Antiquity* 1 (1927), 311–325, by R. G. Collingwood.

<sup>4</sup>On page 434 Professor Rostovtzeff writes thus: "The chief object of this volume has been to investigate the social and economic conditions of the early Roman Empire, to trace the evolution which gradually resulted in the suppression of the leading part played by the cities in the history of the ancient world. The new state based on the peasants and the country was a new phenomenon in history, and its progressive development requires as careful an examination as we have endeavoured to make of the history of its genesis. The reader will, therefore, not expect a detailed analysis of its growth in this book..."

<sup>5</sup>One need not read deeply to discover these 'biases': the author, for instance, is antimilitaristic (e.g. I–II). He has had reason to feel deeply and personally the effects of the Soviet régime (e.g. xv), and his anti-democratic conviction is presented in the solemn paragraph with which he concludes the main part of his volume (486–487): "The evolution of the ancient world has a lesson and a warning for us. Our civilization will not last unless it be a civilization not of one class, but of the masses. The Oriental civilizations were more stable and lasting than the Greco-Roman, because, being chiefly based on religion, they were nearer to the masses. Another lesson is that violent attempts at levelling have never helped to uplift the masses. They have destroyed the upper classes, and resulted in accelerating the process of barbarization. But the ultimate problem remains like a ghost, ever present and unaided: Is it possible to extend a higher civilization to the lower classes without debasing its standard and diluting its quality to the vanishing point? Is not every civilization bound to decay as soon as it begins to penetrate the masses?"

## B. Middle Class Rule (c. 107 B.C.-192 A.D.)

*Social*

1. Defeat of Senate-knight alliance (107-44 B.C.) by Italian bourgeoisie and proletariat, headed by military leaders and politicians. 2. Compromise under Augustus (27 B.C.-14 A.D.) between the old aristocrats and the new middle classes. 3. Renewed struggle under the Julio-Claudians (14-68). Aristocrats broken by reign of terror. Attempt to base State system on city bourgeoisie throughout Empire. New aristocracy recruited from imperial favorites. 4. Extinction of aristocrats and imperial favorites by the Flavians (69-137). Middle class now economic backbone of the State. Helps to suppress civil wars. Fostered by imperial encouragement of city life. Opposed to personal military tyranny (Domitian), the degeneration of the Augustan system. Opposition shown by new imperial Senate and by municipal aristocracy. Result: constitutional monarchy. 5. Constitutional monarchy—the Antonines (138-180), followed by relapse of Commodus (180-192). Based on urban middle class and autonomous cities. Monarch chief magistrate—assisted by Senate (representative of municipal bourgeoisie). Imperial bureaucracy and army coordinated with selfgoverning bodies.

*Economic*

1. Revival of Hellenistic city capitalism (107 B.C.-137 A.D.). Based on commerce, industry, and scientific agriculture. Represented by city bourgeoisie (increase in numbers and importance; urbanization rapid, and city life brilliant). 2. Decline of city capitalism (138-192). Increasing stagnation in technique of commerce, industry, and agriculture. Loss of private initiative and ambition.

## C. Mass Rule (192-c. 500).

*Social*

1. Formation of caste system (municipal bourgeoisie, imperial aristocracy and bureaucracy, proletariat). Bourgeoisie unable to rule World State: exclusive (although it rested on labor of country peasants and city proletariat, it refused to open ranks). Result: unnecessary distinction between three classes. 2. New class alignment: bourgeoisie (*honestiores*) vs. masses (*humiliores*). 3. Gradual change to antagonism between the country and the cities. Attitude of the Emperors: they remove hostility by promoting urbanization and by support of peasants and of city workers. Antagonism basis of third-century anarchy—masses represented by army and acknowledged by Emperors. The Severi fail to secure harmony; civil war and anarchy. Result: destruction of bourgeoisie and upper classes. 4. Oriental despotism (fourth and fifth centuries) based on army, strong bureaucracy, mass of peasants.

*Economic*

1. Degeneration of middle class system to active exploitation of toiling proletariat. Wealth chiefly in land. Commerce and industry decentralized, mere adjuncts to agriculture. Rise of proletariat prevented by exclusiveness of bourgeoisie, increasing demands of State (army, etc.), indifference of State to economic progress and tendency to protect city bourgeoisie at the expense of the masses; diminished purchasing power of money. 2. Bourgeoisie-proletariat struggle. Origin in wars of second century. Emperors unable to solve economic problem. Force and compulsion, applied to both classes, merely added bitterness. Result: collapse of city capitalism and acute crisis of third century; decline of business; primitive economy; State capitalism.

The history of the latter portion of ancient culture, then, is, according to Professor Rostovtzeff, the history of its gradual decline from the restricted but lofty civilization of the aristocratic period to the widespread,

diffused, and vulgarized culture under mass rule. Professor Rostovtzeff concludes his argument with a survey of the existing theories for the decline, and summarizes his own position in the following words (486):

None of the existing theories fully explains the problem of the decay of ancient civilization, if we can apply the word 'decay' to the complex phenomenon which I have endeavoured to describe. Each of them, however, has contributed much to the clearing of the ground, and has helped us to perceive that the main phenomenon which underlies the process of decline is the gradual absorption of the educated classes by the masses and the consequent simplification of all the functions of political, social, economic, and intellectual life, which we call the barbarization of the ancient world.

That there will be criticism of the thesis which the author develops is inevitable; it is, in fact, invited by the bold and uncompromising way in which the theory is set forth. Insofar as the treatment is based upon personal conviction, it will be open to attack by scholars on equally personal grounds. Moreover, the material upon which it is based is often susceptible of more than one interpretation. Take for example the period of the Julio-Claudians, when, according to Professor Rostovtzeff's thesis, the aristocratic party was wiped out by a ruthless reign of terror. Many readers of this volume who are not so carried away by the evidence of Tacitus will doubt whether, in actuality, the decline of the old aristocratic families was due at all to persecution by the Emperors<sup>6</sup>. One may be inclined to question, too, whether the account of the second and third centuries is not too greatly colored by present-day economic and political considerations. The class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the masses in this period is not really a new phenomenon. Essentially it differs little from the ancient senator-peasant warfare in Rome. The exclusiveness of the upper class, with its corollary, the bitter revolt of the lower, is repeated on a grander scale in hundreds of cities and towns all over the Empire, instead of in one alone. After all, aristocratic families are rarely long-lived, and there is something perennially familiar in the antagonism between the overwhelming majority of human beings (whether they are called peasants, proletariat, or masses) in any given period and place, and the smaller group (whether its members are called aristocrats, senators, bourgeoisie, or the like) who, by native ability, family tradition, or accident, are lifted above the general level.

But, although there is chance for difference of opinion, and although this opportunity may be greater from the very clearness of the point of view and the simple proportions to which the problem is reduced, nevertheless the reader will not be able to leave this volume without the conviction that it is a great work, that it is the product of a maturity, of a scholarship,

<sup>6</sup>See for example Martin P. Nilsson, *Imperial Rome*, 340-343 (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co. [no date]). In my review of M. Rostovtzeff, *A History of the Ancient World*, Volume 2, Rome (to be published presently in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY), I shall call attention to the author's rather exaggerated confidence in the reliability of Tacitus. When, in the present volume (86), he speaks of "The wonderful picture of the civil war given by the greatest psychologist in history . . .", he is, to say the least, over-enthusiastic.

and of a power of synthesis possessed by few living students of the ancient world. The text is interesting enough to be used as collateral reading for College freshmen; the notes—many of them, in effect, learned articles in condensed form<sup>1</sup>—are a repository for highly specialized information which will be appreciated by scholars.

The text presents, as usual, so many excellent summaries and comments that it is difficult to keep from quoting. I may call the reader's attention, merely by way of example, to a few of these. The Gracchan program is cleverly compared to that of the revolutionary leaders in Greek cities (24). The whole picture of the Civil Wars of the first century (Chapter 1) is a brilliant compression. The author's attitude may be indicated by the following quotation on the program of Caesar (28):

Caesar perished at the hands of a group of conspirators before his civil work had wellnigh begun. We have no means of judging what would have happened if he had had time to reorganize the state. There are some indications that he had a definite programme of reforms in his mind, but it is beyond our power to reconstruct it in detail. His 'monarchy', as opposed to Pompey's 'principate', seems to me a dream of modern scholars, who are influenced by the propaganda carried on by the enemies of Caesar during his lifetime and after his death. In the eyes of his murderers Caesar was certainly a 'monarch' and a 'tyrant'.

A useful survey of the conditions in the first century (36–37) is followed by a sane statement of the work of Augustus (41–42), together with comments on the prosperity of Italy under that Emperor's *laissez faire* policy (59, 68, 74). The author's political comments are based not only upon thorough mastery of the sources, but also upon common sense; see for instance his refusal to accept the troubles of the years 69–70 as due to a separatist movement (85), and his explanations of the Emperors' attitude toward the city mob (79–80), of Vespasian's exclusion of the Italians (87–88), and of the same Emperor's opposition to the philosophers (108–111). Business life and trade are both handled with sureness; take for example the exposition of the government's unwillingness to protect Italian, against provincial, trade (164–166), and the excellent summary of business life under the Flavians (145–169).

Chapters 6 and 7 are devoted to a survey of city and country life in Italy and the provinces (180–305). It is in rapid syntheses of this sort that the author excels. His amazing acquaintance with the wide literature and his ability to generalize are conspicuous. The whole survey is followed by a summary (290–296). Of the concluding portion of the volume (Chapters 9–11), which presents in detail the author's theory of the decline of the fabric of classical civilization, I have already spoken.

Attention should be called to the admirable illustrations, for which the publishers as well as the author

<sup>1</sup>One of them, indeed, is especially designed to supplant a previous work of the author's. It is a closely packed article (572–576) on the owners of large estates in Egypt under the early Empire. Another (513–515) is an admirable estimate of the significance of the excavations in Pompeii. For still others see pages 494–496, 496–497, 503–505, 524–527, 557, 577, etc.

should receive credit. The volume is a fine example of skilful bookmaking. There is an adequate Index.  
WASHINGTON SQUARE COLLEGE, CASPER J. KRAEMER, JR.  
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Imperial Rome. I. Men and Events. II. The Empire and Its Inhabitants. Translated from the Swedish of Martin P. Nilsson by the Rev. G. C. Richards, D. D. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company [no date]. Pp. xvi + 376. 24 plates. 1 map.

The contents of Professor Nilsson's volume are as follows.

Chronological Table (xiii–xvi); Book I. Men and Events: I. The Julio-Claudian House (3–34); II. The Civilian Emperors (35–64); III. The Military Emperors (65–86); IV. Reorganisation and the Conflict of Religions (87–121); V. The Fall of the Empire (122–152).

Book II. The Empire and Its Inhabitants. I. The Empire: (i) The Frontiers (155–172), (ii) The Provinces (173–203), (iii) Communications (204–222), (iv) Foreign Countries (223–240); II. Rome and the Provinces (241–280); III. The Army (281–316); IV. The Population Problem (317–367); Index (369–376).

This is the first of two volumes which will portray social and economic conditions in the Roman Empire as a prelude to a study of the 'Decline and Fall'. Its author is a distinguished scholar whose works on various phases of classical antiquity have been translated and are familiar to English readers. The present volume, despite its popular format—it follows the English system of dispensing with footnotes, and the illustrations<sup>2</sup> are of the type which are generally included in textbooks—is really deserving of serious consideration. The style is uninteresting. A certain dryness may be due in part to the translator, who is responsible for an occasional awkward turn or inaccuracy<sup>3</sup>, but there can be little doubt that the author himself has a matter-of-fact and encyclopedic style: he is fond of collections of material, which he puts together in a rather jerky fashion<sup>4</sup>, and of inserting occasional comments not because they are strictly relevant, but because he aims at completeness, as one would add a footnote or a reference to a treatise<sup>5</sup>.

The aim of the volume and the method of procedure are clearly stated in the Preface (vi–vii):

An examination of the internal condition of the Empire from the social, economic, and cultural points of view has been my chief object. But it was necessary, to attain a true perspective, that this should be preceded by a survey of events, and a description of the Roman world power as a civilising force. The final catastrophe is delineated against this really brilliant background.

<sup>2</sup>The selection of photographs is of a most routine nature. The usual run of pictures, e.g. the Prima Porta Augustus, the familiar busts of Emperors, the Pont du Gard, etc., are all reproduced on rather inferior plates. There is but limited description of the illustrations, and little clue to the purpose to which they are to be put. Only rarely do they specifically illustrate the text. There is a good map of the Roman Empire facing page 160, although it is perhaps too ambitious in attempting to cover the whole period, and the effort to include detail has made the general effect somewhat cluttered.

<sup>3</sup>Compare e.g. "...A fleet in the Black Sea and the English Channel were required..." (206–207); "...A man required to flavour his bread with salt..." (249); "different to" (257).

<sup>4</sup>Take for example the account of the advantages of living in Rome as evidenced by the games, the free gifts, and the enjoyment of public buildings (243–256).

<sup>5</sup>Note e.g. the definition of *terra sigillata* (264).

... In this age of specialism so comprehensive a task should rightly be distributed among half a dozen authors. As well as the historian, the archaeologist, the philologist, the philosopher, the economist, the student of religions and the theologian should each have his say. This plan is often followed in large and comprehensive historical works, but the result is that the common point of view is sacrificed. Each contributor pipes a tune of his own, and harmony is a secondary affair. I do not fail to recognise the risk entailed in a method directly opposed to this: it is not in the power of man to multiply his special qualifications as required. That I have ventured on this method, is due to my conviction that a complete picture must be given from a single point of view....

The introductory summary runs along conventional lines, and exceptions can rarely be taken to Professor Nilsson's critical attitude. Thus for instance the portrait of Augustus (3-19) is the familiar one, and is free from any attempt at novelty, except perhaps in its decidedly favorable treatment of Antony<sup>3</sup>. In dealing with the Julian-Claudians the author makes some attempt to discard the colored glasses of Tacitus. Nothing startling or new is developed, but there is a certain freshness of viewpoint. While the author does, perhaps, less than justice to Claudius and Nero, he is very favorable in his treatment of Tiberius (19-25), who, in his estimation, was one of the best Emperors, except for his procrastination and his inability to judge men. The survey of the Empire under Augustus (153-173) is interesting but rather thin<sup>4</sup>. The author lays intelligent stress upon the natural division of the Empire into the two natural parts, Greek and Latin, which were at the basis of the later cleavage (173-178). The survey of the provinces (178-204) is also rather thin and perfunctory. But the chapter on Communications (204-222) is admirable, despite the fact that it contains one of those encyclopedic collections, a word-description of the Roman road-system (211-218).

The climax of the volume comes, however, in the last two chapters. Of these the first (281-316) gives an excellent survey of the organization of the army and of army life in general. The author is a firm believer in militarism, and especially in the need of an educated volunteer army: "Decay in military efficiency", he says (308), "set in as a consequence of the disappearance of culture<sup>5</sup> from the army and its officers". The picture which he draws (304-316) of the decay of

<sup>3</sup>See e.g. the author's sensible comment on the relations of Antony and Cleopatra (9).

<sup>4</sup>It poses in an interesting way (170-171) one of those futile questions, 'What might have happened if...?' In this case the question turns on Augustus's withdrawal from the Elbe frontier.

<sup>5</sup>This stress on culture is significant. The reader may be interested in the following quotation (361-362), which embodies Professor Nilsson's point of view: "...At the time when a crude, popular Darwinism dominated throughout, the theory was seriously maintained that the suspiciousness of emperors and rulers, which removed every one distinguished for independence and originality, and got rid of all those who were above the average, had, by an artificial selection, created a people of slavish soul and intellectual sterility. It is an untenable theory that a selection, whether natural or artificial, can produce such an effect in a few generations. If the whole of the educated class in Sweden were removed, the peasants of Sweden, from whom nine-tenths of them come, could immediately make up the loss, provided that an environment of culture existed in which the new generation could grow up. For culture is tradition. The annihilation of the civilized environment during the economic misery of the third century worked far more destructively than all the judicial murders of the Emperors and the violent acts of the soldiers".

Roman military discipline is well worth reading as a summary of the barbarization of the Empire. Fundamental to this decay, in the author's opinion, was pacifism. He offers a shrewd criticism (299-300) of this doctrine (not perhaps without an eye to modern politics), and summarizes well its effect on Roman policy after Constantine (315-316).

More important even than the treatment of the army and, in a sense, the core of the volume, is the chapter on Population (317-367). The idea upon which this chapter is based, while not entirely new, is so clearly stated that the reader may find an epitome useful. According to Professor Nilsson's view, the decline of culture was due to the Roman inability to absorb the extraneous elements in its population. This inability is dependent upon certain moral and social conditions, of which he finds "economic individualism" one of the most important. Not without some unexpressed criticism of modern tendencies, he points out the evil effects of the economic independence of women, of the newer concept of marriage as existing for the individual rather than for the state, and of the consequent increase in childlessness. He then takes up (Problems of Population, 338-352) the alteration in the national stock which was the result of the following: (1) the weakening of the pure cultural stock by the newer but less valuable elements; (2) the decline of great families, a decline not solely due to the ill-will of the Emperors; (3) the growing importance of the provincials, only one evidence of which was the supplanting of the Italians in trade by the Syrian; (4) the growth and absorption of a freedman class, chiefly of Eastern origin; (5) the increasing barbarian infiltration from the North, a process which began with Augustus and reached imposing proportions only under Marcus Aurelius.

So far the treatment is conventional enough. In his interpretation of these facts, however, Professor Nilsson lays novel stress upon a new feature. Studies in heredity, he claims, show that a race after intermixture with other elements must "settle" in order to develop a "national" or "racial" consciousness, i.e. a culture. The trouble with the Empire was not that it underwent a sudden change in composition or that it put down all barriers to intermixture. It deteriorated because its lack of discrimination was continuous and gave no opportunity for the new national consciousness to develop. Accordingly it was not until the "settling" of the nations in the Middle Ages that the mongrel mixture resolved itself into its natural divisions.

For the average reader the book will be very handy to have lying around as a source of general information, presented in a clear if unenthusiastic way, about the Roman Empire. The special student of the Empire will find the earlier part of the volume of only mediocre value, but everyone interested in the culture of the Romans and its fall, and in the possible application of the 'lesson' to modern problems, will do well to read the last chapter.

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